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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 03 BOGOTA 005167

SIPDIS

WHA PLEASE PASS TO USAID'S MIKE MAGAN AND BETH HOGAN

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: POST WELCOMES AUTHORIZATION TO SUPPORT  
DEMOBILIZATION PROGRAMS

REF: SECSTATE 72426

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Summary  
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1. Post welcomes reftel and will use it as authorization to give support to specific aspects of the GOC's demobilization/reintegration program for former AUC members, including: (1) monitoring and evaluation, (2) Reference and Orientation Centers (CROs), and (3) judicial and inter-institutional coordination. Direct assistance will not be given to former AUC members. Paragraph six offers a detailed description of each aspect to be funded. End Summary.

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Focus on Improving the Process  
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2. USG support to certain demobilization/reintegration aspects will have a direct impact on dismantling the AUC's terrorist and drug trafficking structure. Our involvement will help ensure that demobilized paramilitaries are thoroughly tracked and held accountable for any recidivism; that the CROs are well-run and staffed by the appropriate judicial and social service agencies; and that government and legal authorities involved in the peace process coordinate their actions to hold former paramilitaries to the program's standards.

3. In part because of our inability to support demobilization/reintegration thus far, the program still has some shortfalls. The GOC has emphasized its commitment to fully dismantling the AUC and preventing former paramilitaries from returning to criminal life. It has designed mechanisms to prohibit demobilized individuals implicated in major crimes from receiving reintegration benefits and to keep track of reintegration participants. However, funding shortfalls and inexperience have made implementation difficult.

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High-Level Commitment  
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4. We have discussed these implementation problems with the GOC, including at the Ambassadorial level. In January, the Ambassador hosted a meeting with the Minister of Interior/Justice, Prosecutor General, Peace Commissioner, Vice Defense Minister, and other principals and their deputies involved in demobilization to underscore the importance of close government management of demobilization/reintegration. The Colombian officials expressed interest in U.S. guidance and assistance in implementing control mechanisms.

5. Successful implementation of demobilization/reintegration programs is key to a lasting peace process. Post will use the USD 1.75 million to broaden and improve the monitoring and control aspects of demobilization/reintegration without providing direct assistance to former AUC members.

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The Details  
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6. Below is a description of the programs that will receive funding:

-- Accompaniment, Monitoring, and Evaluation System (SAME) (Previously referred to as the Tracking, Monitoring and Evaluation System (TMES))(USD 568,000): The SAME is an integrated information system designed to assess each ex-combatant's degree of reincorporation into civil society or risk of returning to illegal conduct, including re-association with a Foreign Terrorist Organization (FTO). Post will use the SAME to determine if USAID-funded reincorporation benefits must be halted to a specific individual to avoid violation of U.S. law preventing provision of "material benefits" to FTO members. SAME also provides GOC reincorporation program managers with assessments of specific reincorporation activities to

determine which are successful or need to be adjusted or abandoned.

Given the close relationship between the SAME and the CROs, the operational costs of the CROs are included in the SAME budget line item, which covers the 11 regional offices and a central office in Bogota. The GOC "Peace Fund" is covering approximately half of the overall cost of operating the 11 regional CROs (approximately USD 250,000 per CRO per year). Additional GOC support covers the salaries of the personnel assigned from government institutions. Each CRO will be staffed by SAME officials, contracted by IOM and paid for by USAID, who will input data into the system during ex-combatant visits to the CRO and from other information sources, including ex-combatant house-visits by SAME personnel and feedback from community leaders and reincorporation program operators, e.g., a vocational training school instructor.

-- Survey and Registration, and Strengthening and Expanding CROs (USD 525,000): With USAID support, the GOC surveys and registers combatants during the pre-demobilization concentration phase. The survey provides personal information; e.g., age, birthplace, etc., as well as expectations and desires relative to reincorporation into civil society; e.g., where ex-combatants plan to live during the reincorporation phase. All data is put into the SAME database. Registration involves photographing and fingerprinting each combatant and issuing a special identification card. Ex-combatants must present the card whenever they visit the CROs to receive reincorporation program benefits.

The CROs are the physical and programmatic point of contact between GOC reincorporation program officials and every ex-combatant. Six CROs are now operational with another five planned in areas where ex-combatants are anticipated to reside during the reincorporation phase. CROs will be managed by the Ministry of Interior and Justice, and staffed by Ministry personnel and others from various GOC institutions; e.g., the Attorney General's Office, National Registrar, Ministry of Health, etc.

-- Census of Demobilized Individuals and Publishing of Information Package (USD 157,000): GOC officials have planned a census of individuals in the reincorporation program, in particular to update information on the seven percent or so with whom authorities have had no recorded contact since demobilization. Individuals will be asked to confirm their current residence and contact information, number of family members, national health program enrollment, and current livelihood activities. The census will also be used to broaden the profiling of individuals in terms of background, capabilities, plans and interest in order to develop more precise psycho-social assistance and vocational training programs. The information package to be distributed during the census contains consolidated and up-to-date information on all aspects of the reincorporation program, including the requirement to participate in SAME or risk losing program benefits.

-- Civil Education and Community Outreach (USD 250,000): This new program is directed at both ex-combatants and the communities into which they are reincorporating, and will be implemented by a Colombian NGO under the direction of the OAS Trust of the Americas, an experienced international institution. The program will be primarily implemented via community radio programming covering the areas where reincorporating ex-combatants are concentrated, and will be developed to assist community residents in better understanding the reincorporation program. It will include call-in programs for CRO officials to address concerns and questions. Civil education courses and materials designed for ex-combatants will also be offered at the CROs.

-- Improving Judicial Processing and Coordination Support (USD 75,000): provided for strengthening inter-institutional coordination for vetting and adjudicating eligibility of the demobilized for pardons and reintegration program benefits. While the vetting role centers on prosecutorial and judicial functions, it is nevertheless highly dependent on inter-institutional collaboration and coordination between other non-judicial GOC entities.

Technical assistance to prosecutors and judges will expedite the judicial review and processing required of ex-combatants, beginning in the city of Medellin, where nearly 250 ex-combatants are still in legal limbo nearly 18 months after their demobilization. Lessons learned from this pilot effort will then be applied to the reincorporation program throughout Colombia. This activity will be implemented by USAID's existing rule-of-law implementing partner, sub-contracted by IOM, and involve a working group made up of cognizant GOC institutions.

-- Enhancing Citizen Security and Crime Prevention (USD 175,000): This activity will involve working with local

police commanders and elected officials in primary reincorporation areas (Uraba, Norte de Santander, and Cordoba) to strengthen programs to prevent crime and violence, which international experience has shown can surge in association with combatant demobilizations. This activity will also be implemented by a current implementing partner, Georgetown University, already engaged in citizen security programming in Colombia.

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